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**The Impact of I-deals on Employees' Perceived Employability and The Moderating Role of
Age and Gender**

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Abstract

This study investigates the impact of four types of I-deals – location flexibility, schedule flexibility, financial incentives, and task and work responsibility – on employees' perceived employability across three dimensions: job qualifications, willingness to develop new competencies or change jobs (WDC), and opportunity awareness. Additionally, it examines whether age and gender moderate these relationships. Quantitative research methods were adopted, using an online survey targeting employees working at Dutch organizations with at least 10 employees. A total of 85 employees participated in the survey, where they indicated, based on statements reflecting the I-deal types, whether they had made individual arrangements and how they perceived their own employability, also based on statements reflecting the employability dimensions. The analyses showed the positive impact of task and work responsibility I-deals on all employability dimensions, although this effect diminished when age and gender were included. Contrary to theoretical assumptions, location and schedule flexibility I-deals showed no significant impact on perceived employability. Financial incentive I-deals unexpectedly influenced opportunity awareness but did not impact other employability dimensions. Additionally, gender moderated the relationship between financial I-deals and WDC. No differences were found between younger and older employees. These findings suggest that while task and work responsibility and financial incentive I-deals have some potential for enhancing perceived employability, their impact should not be overestimated. This calls for a careful approach when using I-deals to enhance employability and highlights the need for further research to better understand I-deal's effects.

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1. Introduction

Over the past years, employment relationships have undergone significant changes (Marino et al., 2022). Caused by increasing heterogeneity and competitiveness of the labor market (Marino et al., 2022), organizations are confronted with the vital task of attracting and retaining a talented pool of human capital (Ahmad et al., 2020). In response, organizations have adopted new sets of human resources (HR) strategies aimed at attracting, motivating, and retaining their core workforce (Cappelli, 2008). The human capital of an organization stands out as a source of competitive advantage, employers have therefore prioritized practices to attract talented individuals and establish themselves as preferred employers (Ahmad et al., 2020). Concurrently, employees have gained awareness of the unique value they bring to the organization in terms of knowledge, skills, and network relations (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). This awareness has motivated employees to take on a more proactive role, engaging in negotiations to tailor specific working conditions that best fit their personal needs and preferences (Marino et al., 2022), such as career advancement, job content, and flexible work hours (Rousseau, 2015). As a result, organizations experience a growing presence of idiosyncratic deals, or I-deals (Marino et al., 2022), which are voluntary and personalized agreements negotiated between individual employees and employers regarding employment terms, offering mutual benefits for the parties involved (Rousseau et al., 2006).

I-deals are regarded as highly valuable, as they can help employees to be more adaptable in the dynamic and fast-changing labor market (Van der Heijden et al., 2021). Employees request I-deals for several purposes, solving work-life conflicts (Gascoigne & Kelliher, 2018; Hornung et al., 2009), enriching work experiences (Hornung et al., 2014), or promoting career advancement (Hornung et al., 2009). Simultaneously, these agreements create value for employers, as employees tend to be more proactive and have increased intention to stay at the organization (Simosi et al., 2023), creating a win-win situation (Van der Heijden et al., 2021). Furthermore, the scope of I-deals can vary, ranging from individually agreed-upon work conditions, like training courses, to fully idiosyncratic jobs, in which all employment conditions are individually negotiated (Ostrom et al., 2016).

In the current dynamic and competitive labor market (Marino et al., 2022), it is important for organizations to retain valuable employees and for employees to remain employed regardless of whether it is within their current organization or elsewhere (Ostrom et al., 2016).

Employability is generally understood as the ability of employees to perform their current job, acquire a new job, or create employment by making optimal use of available competencies (Van der Heijde & Van der Heijden, 2006). Having an employable workforce is crucial, as the potential of organizations to achieve business goals depends on the ability of individual employees to continuously develop their qualifications (Van der Heijden, 2011). Furthermore, employers whose employees are highly employable benefit from increased productivity, reduced turnover, and fewer costs resulting from absenteeism (Fleuren et al., 2016). Employability is also very relevant for employees themselves, now that they have to continue working into old age (Freese et al., 2012). Enhancing employees' employability results in highly employable workers that not only possess the latest knowledge and skills but also have the capacity to acquire new expertise in line with evolving occupational demands (Van der Heijden et al., 2016). However, due to the fast-changing required qualifications, it is not easy to sustain employability (Freese et al., 2012).

Virtually all organizations, large and small, are struggling with the challenge of keeping their employees employable, especially now that the retirement age has risen and work has become more flexible (Freese et al., 2012; Rousseau, 2015). Many organizations recognize that collective agreements, such as training programs and job rotation, have insufficient effect on employability (Freese et al., 2012). Therefore, gaining insights into other tools that organizations or employees may use to enhance employability is crucial. Since I-deals reflect organizational efforts to motivate and retain employees by making customized agreements (Rosen et al., 2013), they can shed light on what organizations can do to enhance employees' employability (Oostrom et al., 2016).

Thus far, research did not extensively investigate the relationship between I-deals and employability, as Freese et al. (2012) mentioned there are merely assumptions regarding this relationship and it is therefore necessary to conduct empirical research. Yet, not many researchers have followed up on this recommendation. Simosi et al. (2023) highlight the limited understanding of the impact I-deals have on the careers of those who engage in such personalized agreements. Similarly, Van der Heijden et al. (2021) pointed out that research exploring longer-term consequences of I-deals, such as employees' employability, is in its early stages but holds significance, as employability is a key feature in contemporary employment relationships. Recent studies that do focus on this relation mostly emphasize the impact on older workers (Oostrom et al., 2016; Van der Heijden et al., 2021). However, as employability is crucial for employees of all ages (Van der Heijden et al., 2009), it is important to explore interventions that enhance

employability across age groups. Furthermore, Zhang et al. (2021) recommended future research to investigate the influence of different types of I-deals on employees' employability, not only focusing on developmental I-deals. Similarly, Van der Heijden et al. (2021) also recommended broadening the perspective on I-deals while also investigating how employees' age and gender influence the effects of I-deals on employability, as previous research has indicated that these factors relate to employees' actions to negotiate I-deals (Bal & Boehm, 2019; Lee et al., 2015). Answering these recommendations, this research will focus on how different types of I-deals impact employees' employability, and how this relationship differs for different ages and genders. The research question leading this study will therefore be: *"How do idiosyncratic deals (I-deals) influence employees' perceived employability, and to what extent do age and gender moderate this relationship?"*

Conducting this research and thereby answering the research question contributes to literature and practice. It aims to fill the gap in literature as aforementioned by focusing on the not yet extensively tested relationship between different types of I-deals and employability (Freese et al., 2012; Zhang et al., 2021). Furthermore, age and gender are considered as moderators of this relationship, as recommended by Van der Heijden et al. (2021).

Additionally, Freese et al. (2012) mention that further research on this relationship is not only of scientific relevance but also can be of great value for HR practice. This research can provide concrete insights that encourage organizations to move away from generic HR practices and focus on individual customization. Such tailored strategies that consider unique needs and preferences of employees not only benefit employees but also enhance organizational performance (Freese et al., 2012). This is because the employer gains from having a motivated and valuable employee, who stays with the organization while simultaneously becoming appealing to new valuable employees due to the potential to offer I-deals (Rousseau et al., 2006). Moreover, findings of this study might convince employers to invest in I-deals, despite high transaction costs related to I-deal negotiations and implementation (Kroon et al., 2015). Convincing employers of the beneficial outcomes of certain practices is crucial, as otherwise they are unlikely to invest (Ybema et al., 2020). Furthermore, understanding how I-deals affect employability differently across age and gender provides insight into which groups of employees should be targeted for and granted specific types of I-deals, thereby optimizing their impact on employability, benefiting both

employees and employers (Fleuren et al., 2016; Freese et al., 2012; Van der Heijden et al., 2016; Van der Heijden et al., 2021).

The following chapters will delve into the impact of I-deals on employees' employability and how age and gender moderate this relationship. Firstly, a theoretical framework will explore existing knowledge on employability and different types of I-deals, followed by an elaboration on the theoretical mechanism explaining the relationships under consideration. The methodology chapter will outline the strategies employed to gather and analyze data. Moving forward, the findings chapter will present the empirical results retrieved from data analysis. Based on these results, a detailed discussion will be constructed, including implications, contributions, and limitations of this study, while also proposing avenues for future exploration. Finally, the conclusion will synthesize key findings and aims to answer the research question.

2. Theoretical Framework

Within this chapter, a theoretical framework will be provided regarding I-deals, exploring their distinctive features and various types. Furthermore, the relationships between these different types of I-deals and employees' employability are discussed and how age and gender moderate these relationships.

2.1 Distinctive features of I-deals

I-deals differ at least to some extent from those of employees' co-workers, as they are individualized employment arrangements (Rousseau et al., 2006). There are several distinctive features that differentiate I-deals from other forms of person-specific employment arrangements. Firstly, I-deals are individually negotiated, meaning that an I-deal occurs when an individual negotiates terms with an employer that differ from those of their coworkers (Rousseau et al., 2006). Certain employees, due to their high market power and perceived value, can demand significantly higher compensation and benefits than others (Bartol & Martin, 1989).

Secondly, I-deals are heterogeneous, as their terms are specifically tailored for an individual, deviating from conditions set for others in the organization (Rousseau et al., 2006). This creates within-group heterogeneity concerning rewards and benefits (Klein et al., 1994). Such diversity can stem from various factors such as differences in formal or informal incentives tied to individual performance (Rousseau et al., 2006).

A third distinctive feature is that I-deals benefit both employer and employee by focusing on the employee's value to the organization (Rousseau, 2015). The organization can attract, motivate, and retain valuable employees who, in turn, receive desired resources (Rousseau et al., 2006). As both parties have different preferences, individual negotiation allows the opportunity for a win-win outcome (Rosen et al., 2013).

Lastly, I-deals vary in scope, ranging from a single unique element within standardized employment to entirely personalized arrangements, negotiating nearly all employment terms. While both arrangements have idiosyncratic features, the proportion of unique-to-standardized conditions is greater in the latter case (Rousseau et al., 2006). Furthermore, employees request I-deals for several reasons, leading to diversity in the content of these agreements (Simosi et al., 2021). The subsequent section will discuss the different motivations for employees to pursue I-deals and the corresponding variations in I-deal content.

2.2 Different types of I-deals

Rosen et al. (2013) conducted a thorough literature review on the resources that are commonly exchanged in I-deals across jobs. By doing this, they developed a measure that can be used to study antecedents and outcomes of I-deals (Rosen et al., 2013). As this study focuses on employees' employability as an outcome of I-deals, the dimensions developed by Rosen et al. (2013) will be used as a theoretical basis. Based on the literature review, four primary content dimensions of I-deals were developed; they are a modification of Rousseau and Kim's (2004) dimensions. First, *schedule flexibility*, including flexibility in when an employee performs their job. Second, *location flexibility*, allowing employees to perform their job at different locations. Both flexibility dimensions enable employees to tailor their work schedules or location of work to align them better with individual needs and preferences (Rousseau et al., 2016; Simosi et al., 2021). The increased pursuit of flexibility I-deals comes from the desire to manage the balance between work and personal life, a value becoming increasingly important for employees and contemporary organizations (Hornung et al., 2009). Organizations recognize the importance of a good work-life balance for attracting and retaining qualified, valuable employees and therefore are likely to grant flexibility I-deals to their employees (Hornung et al., 2009).

The third dimension is *task and work responsibility*, a combination of the career development and task I-deals dimensions by Rousseau and Kim (2004). The two can be combined, as both include the aspect of what an employee does in their job (Rosen et al., 2013). According to Rosen et al. (2013), the key distinction between task and career development I-deals is that the career development dimension explores the reasons behind negotiating the job content, namely career advancement aspirations, while task I-deals focus on the specific job content being negotiated. By focusing on what is negotiated, job content, rather than the reasons for negotiation, Rosen et al. (2013) believe that it is possible to more effectively evaluate the resources included in the I-deal. Employers grant these deals to reinforce performance, job commitment, and engagement (Rousseau et al., 2006; Simosi et al., 2021).

The fourth dimension of I-deals is *financial incentives*, involving employees negotiating the terms of their compensation, serving as a mechanism for the organization to recognize an employee's value (Rosen et al., 2013). Offering financial I-deals can strategically function as a means to attract and retain highly valuable employees (Rousseau et al., 2016). Financial I-deals therefore allow organizations to tailor compensation packages to individual contributions and

needs, making them a more attractive employer (Rosen et al., 2013; Rousseau et al., 2016). Literature on I-deals suggests that the content of I-deals, referring to the types of resources involved, plays a crucial role in shaping their outcomes (Simosi et al., 2021), in this study, employability. The upcoming section will therefore explore the underlying mechanisms that can explain the relationship between different types of I-deals and employability.

2.3 I-deals and perceived employability

This study focuses on how employees perceive their own employability and how this is affected by I-deals. Self-perceptions of employability are critical, as people act upon their perception rather than upon objective reality (Roskies & Louis-Guerin, 1990). Perceived employability, as defined by Rothwell and Arnold (2007), is the ability to maintain the job you have or to get the job you desire. This conceptualization includes both the aspect of future success (Van der Heijden, 2002) and the maintenance of the current position (Iles, 1997). This definition aligns well with the focus of this study as it provides understanding of specifically perceived employability, and the study by Rothwell and Arnold (2007) is widely referenced in literature. Wittekind et al. (2010) analyzed existing models on perceived employability in order to come up with core determinants of employability. This analysis resulted in three variables that were most agreed upon to determine perceived employability, namely, job-related qualifications, willingness to develop new competencies or change jobs (WDC), and opportunity awareness (Wittekind et al., 2010).

Job qualifications include employees' education, skills, and experience crucial for employability. They align with human capital theory, suggesting that individuals with higher knowledge, skills, and experience are likely to increase earnings and productivity (Becker, 1993). Secondly, perceived employability includes WDC, which means maintaining a positive attitude towards changing job roles, tasks, or developing additional skills as needed (Wittekind et al., 2010). Third, opportunity awareness includes both the awareness of employment opportunities and an employee's confidence in their ability to perform job search activities successfully (Becker, 1993; Wittekind et al., 2010). For enhancing these aspects that contribute to employees' employability, employees can negotiate I-deals with their employers (Oostrom et al., 2016). In examining this relationship, Social Exchange Theory (SET) can offer a valuable framework (Oostrom et al., 2016).

SET suggests that I-deals form the basis of a social exchange agreement between employees and the organization, where employees with I-deals feel obligated to reciprocate through positive work attitudes and behaviors (Liao et al., 2016), resulting in increased commitment, performance, and more valuable contributions (Hornung et al., 2010; Oostrom et al., 2016). According to SET, I-deals can motivate employees to engage in learning, improve performance, and enhance job satisfaction, as they feel valued and supported by the organization (Rousseau, 2015). This engagement in self-development and improved performance can contribute to perceived employability (Rothwell & Arnold, 2007; Wittekind et al., 2010).

While SET has been the dominant theory serving as an explanatory mechanism in literature on I-deals, Liao et al. (2016) argue that it may not fully explain the relationship between I-deals and employability. They argue that the explanatory mechanism may differ depending on the nature of an I-deal and propose using Goal-Setting Theory (Latham & Locke, 2007) as a complementary perspective. Goal-Setting Theory explains that employee goals serve as internal guides that direct behavior toward specific targets. For instance, an employee pursuing flexibility I-deals may prioritize personal benefits, such as work-life balance, over focusing on self-development and improved performance (Liao et al., 2016). Recognizing the diverse motivational factors inherent in employees' goals offers a complementary perspective to SET in understanding the relationship between I-deals and employees' employability (Liao et al., 2016). The subsequent subsections will delve into the connection between the various types of I-deals and employees' employability, using SET and Goal Setting Theory as explanatory mechanisms.

2.3.1 Location flexibility and employability

Location flexibility I-deals allow employees to have a better work-life balance, as individuals can meet their non-work obligations while effectively maintaining their work responsibilities (Oostrom et al., 2016). While employers may be concerned that such flexibility could lead to decreased work motivation and performance if employees are focusing too much on non-work obligations (Oostrom et al., 2016; Rousseau, 2015), employees with location flexibility often recognize the importance of maintaining qualifications and showing they perform well (Oostrom et al., 2016). To make sure their contributions are visible, they make extra efforts, by, for example, maintaining productivity or engaging in professional development. This does not only improve their employer's perception of their abilities but also enhances their own sense of

capability, leading to increased perceived employability for employees themselves (Rousseau et al., 2016).

Considering the three perceived employability dimensions by Wittekind et al. (2010), location flexibility I-deals, where employees agree to conduct part or all of their work outside the office, are likely to contribute to WDC. This flexibility reflects employees' adaptability and openness to evolving job expectations and responsibilities (Kelliher & Anderson, 2010). By embracing flexibility in work location, employees improve their ability to navigate in diverse work situations, thereby boosting their overall employability and confidence in their ability to navigate diverse professional environments (Wittekind et al., 2010; Van Dam, 2004).

The tendency of employees to reciprocate the granted flexibility through special contributions can be best explained by the principles of SET (Liao et al., 2016). In the context of location flexibility I-deals, employees showcasing their willingness to work outside of the office, for example, working from home, can be seen as positive reciprocity (Liao et al., 2016; Oostrom et al., 2016). Employees' location flexibility indicates a commitment from the employee to engage in efforts beyond regular working hours and locations, reflecting genuine willingness to be flexible (Kelliher & Anderson, 2010). This flexibility is important for employability because it shows the employees' ability to adjust to changing demands, making them more attractive to employers in the current dynamic work environment (Kelliher & Anderson, 2010). Furthermore, flexible employees are more likely to engage in proactive career development, developing new skills that further boost their employability (Wittekind et al., 2010).

Given that location flexibility I-deals promote adaptability and positive reciprocity, employees are likely to exhibit WDC, enhancing their perceived employability (Liao et al., 2016; Oostrom et al., 2016; Wittekind et al., 2010). Therefore, the expectation is that location flexibility I-deals contribute to higher employability, as perceived by employees themselves (Liao et al., 2016; Oostrom et al., 2016).

H1: Location flexibility I-deals are positively related to employees' perceived employability.

2.3.2 Schedule flexibility and employability

Another type of flexibility I-deal relates to when an employee performs their job, schedule flexibility (Rosen et al., 2013). The motive to negotiate for schedule flexibility often results from a misfit between work demands and personal obligations (Oostrom et al., 2016). Securing a

schedule flexibility I-deal establishes a distinctive relation between the I-dealer and the organization. However, it is important to recognize that transitioning to another organization does not remove the ongoing demands arising from an employee's private life. The employee would need to renegotiate the schedule flexibility they need to balance work and private demands in the new work setting. This creates an insecure situation, in which the employee is uncertain if they can replicate a similar work-life balance in different employment situations, leading employees to feel less employable (Oostrom et al., 2016).

Considering the three perceived employability dimensions by Wittekind et al. (2010), schedule flexibility I-deals may negatively impact employees' job qualifications and WDC. Employees prioritizing personal needs over organizational goals may allocate less effort to maintaining qualifications and acquiring new skills, leading to a decline in job-related competencies (Oostrom et al., 2016; Wittekind et al., 2010). Additionally, this prioritization may hinder employees' willingness to adapt to evolving job roles and acquire new competencies, limiting career advancement opportunities (Liao et al., 2016; Oostrom et al., 2016).

The decreased perceived employability as a result of schedule flexibility can be explained by Goal-Setting Theory, instead of merely by SET (Latham & Locke, 2007). SET in the context of schedule flexibility argues that because schedule flexibility is granted to an employee, they reciprocate by providing valuable contributions to the organization and not reducing their contributions to the organization (Tietze & Musson, 2003). However, this explanation might not be sufficient (Liao et al., 2016), as employees negotiate for schedule flexibility when they are driven by a desire to meet personal needs (Rosen et al., 2013). The emphasis on personal goals might result in employees allocating their effort to achieving work-life balance rather than solely focusing on reciprocating by maximizing their contributions to the organization (Liao et al., 2016). As a result of prioritizing personal needs, employees may fail to maintain qualifications and lack motivation to enhance their employability (Oostrom et al., 2016). This, taken together with the uncertainty to replicate a similar work-life balance with a different employer (Oostrom et al., 2016), results in the anticipation that schedule flexibility I-deals have a negative impact on employability, as perceived by employees themselves (Liao et al., 2016; Oostrom et al., 2016; Rosen et al., 2013).

H2: Schedule flexibility I-deals are negatively related to employees' perceived employability.

2.3.3 Financial incentives and employability

Financial incentive I-deals encompass individualized incentives, pay raises, or other compensation adjustments (Rosen et al., 2013) and play an important role in enhancing employees' commitment and can be an indication of the value employees have for their organization (Colella et al., 2007). However, financial I-deals address economic dimensions of work, which may be of lesser importance to employees' employability compared to socio-emotional factors (Rousseau et al., 2009). For employability, the socio-emotional aspects are crucial, contributing to how individuals perceive their capabilities and future success in job searches (Rothwell & Arnold, 2007), while economic aspects provided by financial I-deals do not influence how employees perceive their employability (Rousseau et al., 2009). For this reason, financial incentive I-deals may be unrelated to employees' employability (Ostrom et al., 2016).

Additionally, negotiations over financial incentives are often zero-sum situations, where one party's gain is another party's loss (Simosi et al., 2021). Usually, financial I-deals involve compensation increases without a corresponding requirement for increased contributions to the organization (Rousseau et al., 2016; Simosi et al., 2021). This dynamic may limit the positive reciprocity inherent in SET, used to explain why I-deals result in positive behaviors that enhance employability (Liao et al., 2016). In sum, the lack of a clear relationship between financial incentive I-deals and employees' employability due to the emphasis on the mere economic aspect of a job (Ostrom et al., 2016; Rousseau et al., 2009) results in the anticipation that financial incentive I-deals do not significantly impact employees' employability, as perceived by employees themselves.

H3: Financial incentive I-deals are unrelated to employees' perceived employability.

2.3.4 Task and work responsibility and employability

Task and work responsibility I-deals have shown to significantly impact employee outcomes (Hornung et al., 2010). By offering personalized training and development opportunities tailored to individual needs, these I-deals help to create more engaging and challenging work (Ostrom et al., 2016). They create opportunities for growth, thereby enhancing both job performance and satisfaction (Armstrong-Stassen & Ursel, 2009). Furthermore, the stimulation of personal growth and development through these I-deals enables employees to enhance their competencies (Hornung et al., 2010). Consequently, employees experience a heightened sense of

accomplishment, whether in future job searches or in the maintenance of their current position, thereby enhancing their overall sense of employability (Oostrom et al., 2016).

Considering the three perceived employability dimensions by Wittekind et al. (2010), task and work responsibility I-deals may positively impact employees' job qualifications and WDC. Through personalized training and development opportunities, employees can acquire new skills and competencies relevant to their job roles. This investment in skill development enhances employees' knowledge and expertise, aligning with the employability dimension of job qualifications (Hornung et al., 2010; Oostrom et al., 2016). Additionally, this I-deal contributes to employees' WDC by offering engaging tasks that foster a proactive approach to professional development. As a result, employees become more adaptable to changing job demands, broaden their career prospects, and show more openness to change (Liao et al., 2016; Oostrom et al., 2016).

Examining this through the lens of social exchange, SET argues that interactions are based on mutual benefits, fostering reciprocal relationships (Blau, 1964). Task and work responsibility I-deals create such reciprocal exchanges where employees receive customized job content and development opportunities, while employers benefit from enhanced performance and commitment (Rousseau et al., 2006; Simosi et al., 2021). This exchange forms the basis for a positive ongoing relationship. The perceived employability of employees is influenced by these I-deals, as the resources received contribute to their ability to maintain their current job or secure desired future employment (Rothwell & Arnold, 2007). Additionally, insights from Goal-Setting Theory can shed light on the motivations guiding employees seeking task and work responsibility I-deals (Liao et al., 2016). In this case, employees may prioritize goals related to skill development, professional growth, enhanced competencies, and tailoring tasks to individual preferences, all contributing to an increased sense of employability (Liao et al., 2016; Oostrom et al., 2016). However, Goal-Setting theory does not capture the reciprocal nature of this I-deal and may fall short in addressing the broader interpersonal dynamics, mutual benefit, and reciprocity involved in the relationship between task and work responsibility I-deals and employees' perceived employability (Rothwell & Arnold, 2007), which are, on the other hand, central in SET (Rousseau et al., 2006; Simosi et al., 2021).

In sum, the heightened sense of competence, the ability to secure or transition to new employment, and professional growth following from task and responsibility I-deals result in the expectation that task and work responsibility I-deals positively contribute to employees'

employability, as perceived by employees themselves (Hornung et al., 2010; Liao et al., 2016; Oostrom et al., 2016).

H4: Task and work responsibility I-deals are positively related to employees' perceived employability.

2.3.5 Age as moderator

In literature on employability, age is frequently used as a variable of interest (Oostrom et al., 2016; Van der Heijden et al., 2009; Van der Heijden et al., 2021). Age plays an important role in shaping employees' attitudes, behaviors, and priorities at work and also influences their likelihood of negotiating I-deals and how these deals affect their employability (Bal & Boehm, 2019; Lee et al., 2015). Younger workers often prioritize opportunities for learning, skill development, and career advancement, making them more inclined to pursue employment arrangements that offer them this (Li et al., 2021), such as task and work responsibility I-deals. This I-deal provides employees with more challenging tasks and opportunities for development, which align with their career aspirations and contribute to their perceived employability (Hornung et al., 2010; Liao et al., 2016; Oostrom et al., 2016). As younger employees more often pursue task and work responsibility I-deals (Li et al., 2021), the expectation is that this type of I-deal will have a stronger effect on younger employees' perceived employability compared to older workers.

Age might have less impact on pursuing location and schedule flexibility I-deals, as the desire for work-life balance remains consistent across age groups, even though the reasons for valuing this flexibility may differ between younger and older workers (Li et al., 2021). Younger workers may seek flexibility to pursue personal interests and social activities, while older workers may have family commitments or other responsibilities that require flexibility in their work (Li et al., 2021; Oostrom et al., 2016). Flexibility I-deals therefore allow employees of all ages to fulfill their personal obligations and interests while still managing their work commitments (Oostrom et al., 2016; Van der Heijden et al., 2009). Consequently, the expectation is that both types of flexibility I-deals will have a similar effect on the perceived employability of younger and older workers.

H5: Age moderates the impact of I-deals on perceived employability, where task and work responsibility I-deals (a) have a stronger effect for younger employees, while schedule and location flexibility I-deals (b) have equal effects across age groups.

2.3.6 Gender as moderator

Gender roles are deeply ingrained into society, shaping individuals' behaviors and expectations based on their perceived gender (Cifre et al., 2018). Men and women tend to adhere to different norms and roles, influencing experiences, attitudes, and opportunities in the workplace. When considering the moderating effect of gender on the relationship between I-deals and perceived employability, it is essential to recognize the potential differences in the needs, preferences, and experiences of men and women (Van der Heijden et al., 2021). For instance, women often face challenges related to work-life balance, caregiving, and career advancement opportunities (Acker, 1990) and are more likely to bear the primary caregiving responsibilities compared to men (Bianchi et al., 2000). Consequently, women may be more inclined to seek out flexibility I-deals to manage their multiple responsibilities (Cifre et al., 2018). As women more often pursue flexibility I-deals than men (Cifre et al., 2018), the expectation is that this type of I-deal will have a stronger effect on female employees' perceived employability than on that of male employees.

When considering task and work responsibility I-deals and gender, men may be more inclined to prioritize career advancement, skill development, and professional growth opportunities (Cifre et al., 2018). These objectives align closely with the benefits provided by task and work responsibility I-deals, which offer individuals opportunities for challenging assignments, skill development, and career progression (Rosen et al., 2013). As a result, men may be more proactive in negotiating for task and work responsibility I-deals to advance their careers and enhance their perceived employability. The expectation is therefore that task and work responsibility I-deals have a stronger effect on male employees' perceived employability than on that of female employees.

H6: Gender moderates the impact of I-deals on perceived employability, where task and work responsibility I-deals (a) have a stronger effect for male employees, while schedule and location flexibility I-deals (b) have a stronger effect for female employees.

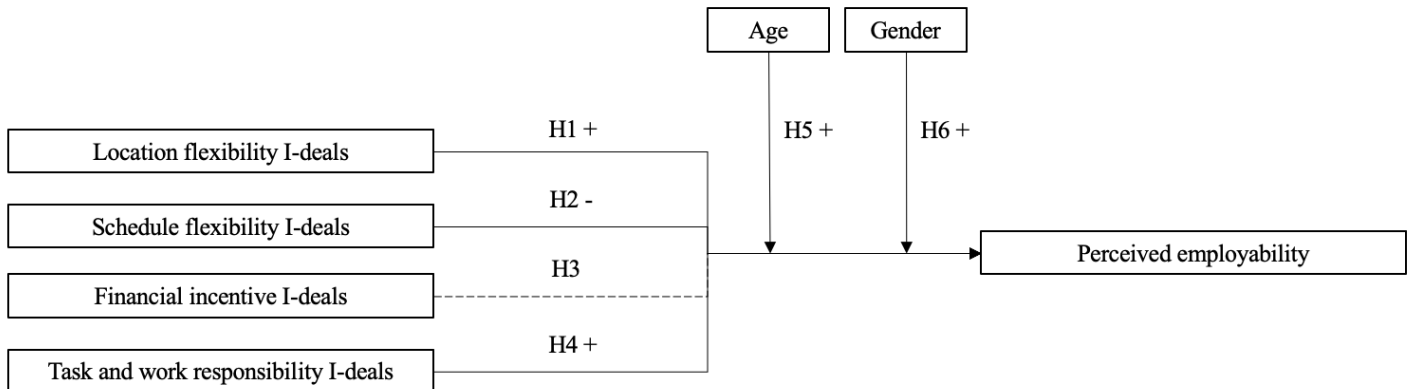
2.4 Conceptual model

Based on the theoretical framework and the subsequent hypotheses, a conceptual model as seen in Figure 1 can be developed. The conceptual model shows that location flexibility and task and work responsibility I-deals are positively related to employees' perceived employability (H1, H4), schedule flexibility I-deals are negatively related to employees' perceived employability

(H2), and financial incentive I-deals are unrelated to employees' perceived employability (H3). Furthermore, it shows that the age and gender of employees moderate the relationship between the I-deals and employees' perceived employability (H5, H6).

Figure 1

Conceptual model



3. Methodology

Investigating how several types of I-deals influence perceived employability and to what extent age and gender moderate this relationship required a quantitative research strategy. Quantitative methods were appropriate for this study due to their ability to systematically measure the multiple variables, assess relationships between them, and generalize findings to broader populations (Creswell, 2017). To achieve this, an online survey was employed using the Qualtrics platform. Surveys are well-suited for quantitative research as they allow for the collection of standardized data from a large sample size, enabling statistical analyses to test hypotheses and examine relationships between variables (Babbie, 2020), in this case I-deals and perceived employability.

3.1 Participants and procedure

This study was conducted among employees working at organizations in the Netherlands employing a minimum of 10 employees, a criterion based on prior research by Fleischmann et al. (2015). They suggested that organizations of this size typically have access to more resources, making individualized arrangements, such as I-deals, more commonly offered. The threshold of 10 employees was therefore considered a relevant benchmark (Fleischmann et al., 2015). The survey was spread via social media platforms, including Facebook and LinkedIn, using an online flyer with a direct survey link, allowing individuals to easily access the survey. Emphasis was placed on maintaining participant anonymity and confidentiality to minimize potential social desirability biases in responses (Van der Heijden et al., 2016). Furthermore, information was gathered from employees across different organizations to increase diversity in the type and number of I-deals participants have negotiated (Ostrom et al., 2016), as recommended by previous studies on I-deals that addressed limitations related to dataset composition (Rosen et al., 2013; Rousseau et al., 2009). This data collection method resulted in a total of 85 participants who completed the online survey. The characteristics of this sample will be further elaborated on in the results section.

3.2 Measures

This study aimed to measure if there is a relationship between different types of I-deals and perceived employability and if age and gender moderate this relationship. This meant measures had to be created for all variables involved.

I-deals. To measure the four types of I-deals, the 16-item questionnaire by Rosen et al. (2013) was used. They found the scale to be reliable and valid by performing an exploratory factor analysis. It was found that the four factors, representing the four types of I-deals, accounted for 65% of the variance (Rosen et al., 2013), meeting the standard as proposed by Hinkin (1998). *Location flexibility I-deals* were measured with **two** items ($\alpha = .89$). An example item is, “Because of my individual needs, I have negotiated a unique arrangement with my supervisor that allows me to complete a portion of my work outside of the office.” *Schedule flexibility I-deals* were measured with **three** items ($\alpha = .78$). An example item is, “My supervisor considers my personal needs when making my work schedule.” *Financial incentive I-deals* were measured with **five** items ($\alpha = .86$). An example item is, “My supervisor has ensured that my compensation arrangement (e.g., hourly vs. salaried) meets my individual needs.” *Task and work responsibility I-deals* were measured with **six** items ($\alpha = .83$). An example item is, “I have successfully asked for extra responsibilities that take advantage of the skills that I bring to the job.” Participants responded to all items using a 5-point Likert scale (from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree).

Perceived employability was measured using the three dimensions constructed by Wittekind et al. (2010). *Job qualifications* were measured with **six** items ($\alpha = .75$), originally developed by Wanberg et al. (2002). An example item is, “My level of education is sufficient for getting a job in my area of work.” *WDC* was measured using two scales. The first scale referred to the willingness to develop competencies and was measured with **three** items ($\alpha = .76$), originally developed by van Dam (2004). An example item is, “I find it important to develop myself in a broad sense, so I will be able to perform different task activities or jobs within the organization.” Secondly, willingness to change jobs or departments was measured with **two** items ($\alpha = .71$), also originally developed by van Dam (2004). An example item is, “In case of organizational changes, I would prefer to stay in my department with my colleagues.” *Opportunity awareness* was measured with **two** items ($\alpha = .87$). An example item is, “I make sure I am informed about vacancies.” Participants responded to all items using a 5-point Likert scale (from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree).

Moderator variables age and gender were measured by asking participants to provide their age numerically and indicate their gender by selecting one of the options – male, female, or preferring not to disclose – at the end of the questionnaire.

Control variables. In order to comprehensively understand the nuances in perceived employability among employees who received similar I-deals or shared the same age and gender, the analysis was controlled for organizational size. Zhang et al. (2021) mention the significant influence of organizational size on both the provision of I-deals and employees' perceptions of their employability. Larger organizations are often equipped with greater resources and structural capacities, enabling them to offer a more diverse range of I-deals to their employees. Consequently, these varied I-deals may have differential effects on how employees perceive their employability within the organization (Zhang et al., 2021). Organizational size was assessed by asking participants to select their organization's employee count: less than 10, small (1-50), medium (51-500), or large (501+) (Hall et al., 1967). Participants from organizations with fewer than 10 employees were directed to the end of the survey, as the minimum requirement was 10 employees (Fleischmann et al., 2015). Additionally, participants were asked whether their organization provided I-deals at all, regardless of their personal utilization. By asking this, a distinction could be made between employees who did not use I-deals because their organization did not offer them and those who had the option but chose not to pursue I-deals.

3.2.1 Dutch questionnaire

The factors and items representing the four types of I-deals as identified by Rosen et al. (2013), as well as the dimensions and items by Wittekind et al. (2010) for perceived employability, were originally in English. However, this study was conducted in the Dutch organizational context, which made conducting the survey in Dutch more appropriate to facilitate participation. To ensure accurate translation, the back-translation method was used. In the first step, the original English questionnaire was translated into Dutch using DeepL Translate, which offers multiple translation options. Then, an individual familiar with the topics of I-deals and employability, who is proficient in both English and Dutch, translated this Dutch version back into English. Some minor differences, primarily in the form of synonyms or variations in word choice, emerged. This comparison helped to identify unclarity in the initial Dutch translation, which were subsequently adjusted. To further improve clarity, two Dutch individuals who were unfamiliar with this study's

topic were asked to complete the questionnaire and provide feedback on the wording and comprehensibility. Based on their suggestions, a few final adjustments were made before the survey was distributed. See Appendices A and B for the English and Dutch versions of the questionnaire.

3.3 Data analysis methods

3.3.1 *Assessing reliability and validity*

Given that the original measurements' reliability and validity were established for the English version, it was necessary to reassess these metrics for the Dutch version of the questionnaire used in this study. To evaluate reliability and validity of the Dutch questionnaire, a reliability analysis was conducted using SPSS 29. Based on this analysis, the internal consistency of each scale was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, with values above 0.60 indicating acceptable reliability (Hinkin, 1998). This process ensured that the Dutch questionnaire maintained its validity and reliability, comparable to the original English version. From this analysis, it resulted that all scales measuring I-deals had a Cronbach's alpha over 0.60 (Table 1).

Furthermore, the scales measuring the employability dimensions job qualifications and WDC had a Cronbach's alpha above 0.6. However, the scale for opportunity awareness had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.30 (Table 1), which represents poor internal consistency of the items in this scale. Given that this scale only consisted of two items, one could not be deleted to increase Cronbach's alpha. Therefore, one of the items was chosen to represent the dimension by itself. When selecting the item to represent opportunity awareness, the statement "I remain current on the trends and developments in my profession" is the more suitable choice. This item has a lower standard deviation (.75), as compared to "I make sure I am informed about vacancies" (.93), reflecting more consistent responses among participants. Conceptually, remaining current on trends provides a more all-round understanding of opportunity awareness, suggesting a proactive approach to career development that includes both job openings and industry trends. Contrarily, the second statement is narrower and focuses on job vacancies only. Therefore, the first statement captures the essence of opportunity awareness better.

Table 1*Reliability Dutch scales*

	Location flexibility I-deals	Schedule flexibility I-deals	Financial incentive I-deals	Task and work responsibility I-deals	Job qualifications	WDC	Opportunity awareness
Number of Items	2	3	5	6	6	5	2
Cronbach's Alpha	.80	.66	.78	.89	.72	.65	.30

3.3.2 Statistical tests

The independent variables examined in this study were the four types of I-deals. Since these variables were measured using a Likert scale, the data could be treated as numerical. Each Likert item was assigned a numerical value ranging from 1 to 5. The dependent variable, perceived employability, was also measured using Likert scale items and could therefore be treated as numerical as well. Moderator variables, age and gender, and the control variable, organizational size, could be considered categorical variables and were able to be included in the analysis by transforming them via a dummy model.

The first step was to compute descriptive statistics to assess the central tendency and variability of the variables. This included calculating means, standard deviations, and frequency distributions for all variables involved in this study. Secondly, correlation analyses were performed to assess the direction and strength of relationships between the variables. Before conducting more complex analyses, it is important to conduct correlation analysis as a preliminary step. Correlations provide a quick overview of the relationships between variables, helping to identify potential patterns or trends in the data (Janse et al., 2021). Consequently, to assess the relationships between each type of I-deal to the perceived employability dimensions, multiple regression analyses were conducted to assess the unique contribution of each type of I-deal to the perceived employability dimensions. Lastly, to explore whether these relationships are conditional on the moderator variables age and gender, analyses using PROCESS macro were performed. Twelve separate analyses were performed, each including one I-deal type, one employability dimension, and the moderators age and gender, allowing examination of both main and interaction effects in a more complex model.

4. Results

4.1 Preliminary analyses

The online survey via Qualtrics was filled in by 100 participants. However, 15 people answered they were working in an organization employing less than 10 people. As this study regards people working in organizations employing more than 10 people, these answers were deleted from the sample. A sample of 85 participants remained, which does not live up to the sample goal of 107 needed to perform the statistical tests for this study with a statistical power of 0.95 (Faul et al., 2007). However, with the sample of 85, it is possible to perform the statistical tests for this study with a statistical power of 0.89 (Faul et al., 2007). Before testing this study's hypotheses, some preliminary analyses were conducted, including descriptive statistics, correlation analyses, and assumption testing.

4.1.1 Descriptive statistics

Participants were asked for their gender and age, as these are moderators for this study. 41 men and 44 women participated in this study, reflecting an almost equal gender distribution. The mean age was 38.81 (SD = 14.51). The skewness and kurtosis values for age fell within the range of -3 and +3, indicating that the age data could be considered normally distributed (Field, 2018).

Furthermore, participants were asked to indicate organizational size, where 44 indicated that they work in a large organization and the remaining participants were evenly split between small and medium-sized organizations. Lastly, people were asked whether their organization offered I-deals in general, where 52 people answered yes and 33 no. However, due to the small sample size and the observation that most participants who reported their organization does not offer I-deals still have individual arrangements, it was not feasible to divide the sample based on this variable. The same limitation applied to the control variable organizational size. Consequently, neither of these variables were controlled for in the analyses.

Considering the independent variables, schedule flexibility I-deals had the highest mean value among the four types of I-deals, making them the most commonly provided. Financial incentive I-deals, on the other hand, were the least common with the lowest mean value (Table 2). Additionally, the mean values for the three perceived employability dimensions showed that opportunity awareness was slightly higher (Table 3), indicating that there were only small differences in how employability was perceived across the dimensions. Lastly, the skewness and

kurtosis values for all variables fell within the acceptable range of -3 and +3 (Table 2 & 4), supporting the assumption of normality (Field, 2018).

Table 2

Descriptive statistics I-deals

	<i>N</i>	Minimum	Maximum	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Skewness/Std. Error	Kurtosis/Std. Error
Location flexibility	85	1	5	2.91	1.28	.08	-2.16
Schedule flexibility	85	1.33	5	3.64	.81	-2.63	.39
Financial incentives	85	1	5	2.76	.87	.87	-.45
Task and work responsibility	85	1	5	3.37	.94	-2.41	-.09

Note. All I-deals were measured on a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 indicates strong disagreement (low or no presence of I-deals) and 5 indicates strong agreement (high presence of I-deals).

Table 3

Descriptive statistics employability dimensions

	<i>N</i>	Minimum	Maximum	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Skewness/Std. Error	Kurtosis/Std. Error
Job qualifications	85	2.50	5	3.89	.50	-.82	-.22
WDC	85	2.20	5	3.69	.59	-.31	-.55
Opportunity awareness	85	2	5	4.01	.75	-1.76	.88

Note. All employability dimensions were measured on a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 indicates strong disagreement (low perceived employability) and 5 indicates strong agreement (high perceived employability).

4.1.2 Correlations

Following the descriptive statistics, Table 4 presents the correlations between this study's key variables, including the four I-deal types and the three dimensions representing perceived employability. The results indicate that task and work responsibility I-deals have a significant correlation with all employability dimensions. Furthermore, there are correlations among the I-deals themselves, indicating that people used multiple types of I-deals. These correlations provide

an initial overview of the strength and direction of relationships, providing insights for the subsequent analyses.

Table 4

Correlations between variables

	1. Location flexibility	2. Schedule flexibility	3. Financial incentives	4. Task and work responsibility	5. Job qualifications	6. WDC	7. Opportunity awareness
1. Location flexibility	1.00						
2. Schedule flexibility	.16	1.00					
3. Financial incentives	.48*	.44*	1.00				
4. Task and work responsibility	.47*	.40*	.60*	1.00			
5. Job qualifications	.22*	.02	.11	.31*	1.00		
6. WDC	.19	.01	.05	.25*	.14	1.00	
7. Opportunity awareness	.00	.08	.21	.25*	.50*	.03	1.00

Note. * Correlation is significant at the alpha level of 0.05

4.1.3 Assumption testing

Besides normality, as established in the descriptive statistics, more regression assumptions need to be met to perform standard regression analyses and use PROCESS to ensure validity of the results. In examining the relationships between the independent and dependent variables, it was observed that not all relationships were clearly linear. However, standard linear regression was still used as it can provide reliable estimates also with slight deviations from linearity (Field, 2018). Additionally, PROCESS uses bootstrapping, which helps to provide reliable estimates even when the assumptions of linearity are not fully met. Despite this, non-linear relationships can still influence the outcomes, so it is important to interpret the results with caution.

Additionally, the assumption of no multicollinearity was met, as there are no problematic high correlations between the independent variables (see Table 4), all not exceeding the threshold

of 0.70 (Field, 2018). Homoscedasticity, the assumption that the variability of residuals is equal, was examined using Levene's test. The independent variables were tested separately in combination with the dependent variables, and all alpha levels were below .05. This indicated that the assumption of homoscedasticity was not violated, as the spread of the error terms is consistent across values of the independent variables (Field, 2018).

Furthermore, the assumption of independence of errors was examined using the Durbin-Watson test. The output indicated that all values fell within the acceptable range of 1.5 to 2.5, as proposed by Field (2018), suggesting no significant correlation among the residuals and thus fulfilling the assumption of independence of errors. Lastly, it was analyzed whether the data included influential outliers by analyzing the standardized residuals. All values fell within the acceptable range of ± 3 , indicating that there are no influential outliers in this dataset.

4.2 Standard linear regression

Four separate standard multiple linear regression analyses were conducted to examine the relationships between the four types of I-deals and the three perceived employability dimensions, assessing the predictive power and statistical significance of these relationships. Tables 5-7 display the results of these analyses including regression coefficients, significance values, and model fit for each employability dimension.

The first regression model examined the effect of each I-deal type on job qualifications (Table 5). This model was significant, explaining 12 percent of the variance in job qualifications. From the I-deal types, only task and work responsibility I-deals were a significant predictor for job qualifications. The B coefficient was positive, indicating a positive relationship, suggesting that employees with task and work responsibility I-deals perceived themselves to be more employable in terms of job qualifications. The other three I-deals did not significantly predict job qualifications.

Table 5*Regression output I-deals - Job qualifications*

	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>95% CI</i>	β	Sign. (<i>p</i>)
Constant	3.49	0.27	[2.96, 4.02]	-	<.001
Location flexibility	0.05	0.05	[-0.05, 0.15]	.13	.30
Schedule flexibility	-0.05	0.07	[-0.20, 0.10]	-.08	.49
Financial incentives	-0.08	0.08	[-0.24, 0.09]	-.13	.36
Task and work responsibility	0.19	0.07	[0.04, 0.34]	.36	.01*

Note. $R^2 = .12$, $F(4, 80) = 2.79$, $p = .03$

The second regression model examined the effect of each I-deal type on WDC (Table 6). This model approached significance, explaining 10 percent of the variance. Although this model did not meet the set significance threshold of .05, the p-value of .09 could indicate a potential relationship worth further exploration and should therefore not be ignored. Similarly to job qualifications, task and work responsibility I-deals were the only I-deal type with a statistically significant effect on WDC. The B coefficient was positive, indicating a positive relationship, suggesting that employees with this type of I-deal were more willing to develop their skill set or pursue other jobs. The other three I-deals did not significantly predict WDC.

Table 6*Regression output I-deals – WDC*

	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>95% CI</i>	β	Sign. (<i>p</i>)
Constant	3.35	0.32	[2.72, 3.97]	-	<.001
Location flexibility	0.07	0.06	[-0.05, 0.18]	.14	.26
Schedule flexibility	-0.05	0.09	[-0.22, 0.13]	-.06	.61
Financial incentives	-0.12	0.10	[-0.32, 0.07]	-.18	.21
Task and work responsibility	0.20	0.09	[0.02, 0.38]	.31	.03*

Note. $R^2 = .10$, $F(4, 80) = 2.11$, $p = .09$

The third regression model examined the effect of each I-deal type on opportunity awareness (Table 7). Similarly to model 2, this model approached significance, explaining 10 percent of the variance. Although this model did not meet the set significance threshold of .05, the p-value of .09 could indicate a potential relationship worth further exploration and should therefore not be ignored. None of the I-deal types were statistically significant in predicting opportunity

awareness; however, task and work responsibility I-deals approached significance with a p-value of .06. This suggests a trend in which employees with this type of I-deal felt more aware of their career opportunities; however, this finding should be interpreted with caution given the p-value just above .05.

Table 7

Regression output I-deals – Opportunity awareness

	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>95% CI</i>	<i>β</i>	<i>Sign. (p)</i>
Constant	3.47	0.40	[2.67, 4.27]	-	<.001
Location flexibility	-0.11	0.07	[-0.26, 0.03]	-.19	.13
Schedule flexibility	-0.07	0.11	[-0.29, 0.16]	-.07	.56
Financial incentives	0.15	0.12	[-0.10, 0.39]	.17	.25
Task and work responsibility	0.21	0.11	[-0.01, 0.44]	.27	.06

Note. $R^2 = .10$, $F(4, 80) = 2.09$, $p = .09$

In sum, in the standard regression analyses, task and work responsibility I-deals consistently came forward as a significant predictor of job qualifications and WDC. These findings aligned with the findings from the correlation analysis (Table 4), where these variables were found to significantly correlate with each other. The regression findings supported this pattern, suggesting that task and work responsibility I-deals have a meaningful relationship with perceived employability. Lastly, task and work responsibility I-deals had a near significant effect on opportunity awareness. This, combined with the significant correlation found in the correlation analysis (Table 4), suggests that the relationship between these two variables may indeed be meaningful. However, the regression results indicate that this relationship may be more complex or influenced by other variables in the model.

4.3 PROCESS analyses

In addition to the standard regression analyses, twelve separate analyses were performed using PROCESS macro to examine the moderating effects of age and gender. Each analysis assessed the effect of one I-deal type on one perceived employability dimension while also including the interaction effects of age and gender. Table 8-11 present the main effects of each I-deal on the employability dimensions, as well as the direct effect and interaction terms for age and gender using PROCESS analyses.

4.3.1 Flexibility I-deals

The analyses showed that location flexibility I-deals did not have a statistically significant main effect on any of the employability dimensions. Additionally, the interaction effects with age and gender were not significant across these dimensions (Table 8). Regarding schedule flexibility I-deals, the results indicated that this type of I-deal did not have a statistically significant effect on any of the employability dimensions. The interaction terms for both age and gender were also not significant, suggesting no moderation effect (Table 9). Only marginally significant effects were found for the main effect of gender on WDC, as well as for the interaction effect of gender on job qualifications.

Table 8

PROCESS output Location flexibility I-deals

	Job qualifications	WDC	Opportunity awareness
R ²	.204	.073	.056
Main Effect (B)	.057 (.660)	-.091 (.576)	-.202 (.333)
Age (Moderator) (B)	.009 (.306)	-.007 (.544)	-.011 (.422)
Interaction I-deal x Age (B)	.001 (.725)	.002 (.516)	.005 (.254)
Gender (Moderator) (B)	-.010 (.971)	-.534 (.114)	-.084 (.845)
Interaction I-deal x Gender (B)	-.052 (.530)	.139 (.186)	-.065 (.628)

Note. Effect sizes (B) are followed by significance values (p) in parentheses. $p < .05$ indicates statistical significance (marked with *); $p < .10$ indicates marginal significance (marked with #)

Table 9

PROCESS output Schedule flexibility I-deals

	Job qualifications	WDC	Opportunity awareness
R ²	.213	.056	.041
Main Effect (B)	.322 (.137)	-.061 (.825)	.000 (1.000)
Age (Moderator) (B)	.023 (.152)	.010 (.634)	.002 (.947)
Interaction I-deal x Age (B)	-.003 (.513)	-.003 (.589)	.001 (.925)
Gender (Moderator) (B)	.709 (.159)	-1.136 (.079#)	-.451 (.583)
Interaction I-deal x Gender (B)	-.244 (.068#)	.260 (.127)	.059 (.785)

Note. Effect sizes (B) are followed by significance values (p) in parentheses. $p < .05$ indicates statistical significance (marked with *); $p < .10$ indicates marginal significance (marked with #)

4.3.2 *Financial incentive I-deals*

The analyses showed mixed results for financial incentive I-deals (Table 10). For the employability dimension opportunity awareness, the analyses showed a significant positive effect, indicating a meaningful relationship, where employees with financial incentive I-deals feel more aware of their career opportunities. Furthermore, for this dimension, the direct effect of age and the interaction effect were marginally significant, with the p-value slightly above the threshold of statistical significance. Even though this result did not meet the strict cut-off, it indicated a potential relationship that might be worth further investigation. Given that the interaction term was negative suggests that as age increases, the effect of financial incentive I-deals on opportunity awareness might slightly decrease.

The effect on job qualifications was marginally significant as well, suggesting a potential positive relationship, where employees with financial I-deals might perceive themselves as better qualified for their job. Furthermore, the main effect of the moderator age was significant for this dimension, suggesting that age itself has a direct relationship with job qualifications, regardless of the presence of financial incentive I-deals. That this main effect is positive means that as age increases, job qualifications tend to increase as well.

Financial incentive I-deals did not have a significant direct effect on WDC. Even though there was no significant main effect of financial incentive I-deals on this employability dimension, the main effect of gender on WDC was significant, as well as the interaction effect of gender. The main effect of gender was negative, indicating that women are less willing to develop new competencies or change jobs compared to men. The interaction effect, on the other hand, was positive, suggesting that when financial I-deals increase, this difference changes, with financial I-deals having a stronger positive impact on women. So, although women initially scored lower than men on this outcome, the presence of financial incentive I-deals increased their WDC more than it did for men.

Table 10*PROCESS output Financial Incentive I-deals*

	Job qualifications	WDC	Opportunity awareness
R ²	.223	.079	.109
Main Effect (B)	.341 (.084#)	-.367 (.143)	.731 (.021*)
Age (Moderator) (B)	.024 (.048*)	-.016 (.303)	.038 (.052#)
Interaction I-deal x Age (B)	-.005 (.261)	.007 (.245)	-.013 (.070#)
Gender (Moderator) (B)	.455 (.202)	-1.051 (.022*)	.306 (.588)
Interaction I-deal x Gender (B)	-.243 (.058#)	.334 (.042*)	-.197 (.332)

Note. Effect sizes (B) are followed by significance values (p) in parentheses. $p < .05$ indicates statistical significance (marked with *); $p < .10$ indicates marginal significance (marked with #)

4.3.3 Task and work responsibility I-deals

Regarding task and work responsibility I-deals, the results showed that this I-deal did not have a significant main effect on any employability dimensions (Table 11). Additionally, the interaction terms for age and gender were also not significant across all dimensions. Only a marginally significant main effect of gender was found on WDC.

Table 11*PROCESS output Task and work responsibility I-deals*

	Job qualifications	WDC	Opportunity awareness
R ²	.248	.113	.082
Main Effect (B)	.188 (.269)	-.236 (.274)	.098 (.726)
Age (Moderator) (B)	.011 (.369)	-.021 (.185)	-.005 (.804)
Interaction I-deal x Age (B)	.000 (.894)	.006 (.176)	.003 (.635)
Gender (Moderator) (B)	.252 (.525)	-.880 (.083#)	.070 (.914)
Interaction I-deal x Gender (B)	-.111 (.323)	.223 (.119)	-.067 (.714)

Note. Effect sizes (B) are followed by significance values (p) in parentheses. $p < .05$ indicates statistical significance (marked with *); $p < .10$ indicates marginal significance (marked with #)

4.4 Hypotheses

4.4.1 Hypotheses on I-deals and perceived employability

First, both the standard regression and PROCESS analyses found no statistically significant positive relationship between location flexibility I-deals and any of the employability dimensions. Therefore, hypothesis 1 is rejected.

Second, both analyses did not show any statistically significant negative relationships between schedule flexibility I-deals and any of the employability dimensions. The data did not support hypothesis 2 and is therefore rejected.

Third, the results for financial incentive I-deals were mixed. In the standard regression analyses, no statistically significant relationships between financial I-deals and any of the employability dimensions were found. Similarly, the correlation analyses did not show any significant correlations between this type of I-deal and the employability dimensions. However, in the PROCESS analyses, there was a statistically significant main effect found on opportunity awareness, suggesting a potential relationship worth further exploration. As some relationship was found in one of the analyses, hypothesis 3 is rejected, as it was originally expected that financial I-deals and perceived employability would have no relationship.

Lastly, the results of the standard regression showed that task and work responsibility I-deals positively predicted job qualifications and WDC and had a near-significant positive relationship with opportunity awareness. These findings support hypothesis 4, suggesting a positive relationship between task and work responsibility I-deals and perceived employability, and the hypothesis is retained. However, this relationship was not found to be significant in the PROCESS analysis. Therefore, even though a relationship was found in the standard regression model, which only included the independent variables, the results should be interpreted with caution. The significance of this relationship appears to diminish when the model gets more complex, involving additional variables.

4.4.2 Hypotheses on the moderation of age and gender

Regarding the moderating effects of age and gender, the results indicated that age did not significantly moderate the effects of any I-deal type on any employability dimension (Table 8-11). Consequently, as no differential effects were found for younger or older employees, hypothesis 5 is rejected. However, the interaction effect of age on the relationship between financial incentive

I-deals and opportunity awareness was marginally significant, which could be cause for further exploration of this effect.

Regarding gender, the findings indicated a significant interaction effect between gender and financial incentive I-deals concerning WDC (Table 10). Additionally, a near-significant interaction effect between gender and financial I-deals concerning job qualifications was found (Table 10). However, for the other I-deal types and employability dimensions, no significant interaction effects with gender were found (Tables 8, 9, and 11). It is important to note that because no initial relationship was hypothesized for financial I-deals with employability, this particular I-deal was not taken up in hypothesis 6, focusing on the differential effects of the other I-deal types on employability based on gender. As these hypothesized effects were not found significant, hypothesis 6 is rejected. While there was a significant interaction effect of gender found for financial I-deals, this was not part of the original hypothesis. Further interpretation of these findings will be provided in the discussion chapter.

5. Discussion

This study examined the relationship between four types of I-deals - location flexibility, schedule flexibility, financial incentives, and task and work responsibility - and employees' perceived employability across three dimensions: job qualifications, WDC, and opportunity awareness. It also explored the moderating effects of age and gender. Key findings revealed the positive impact of task and work responsibility I-deals on all employability dimensions, although this effect diminished when age and gender were included. Financial incentive I-deals unexpectedly influenced opportunity awareness, while gender moderated the relationship between financial I-deals and WDC. No differences were found between younger and older employees.

This study contributes to existing literature by including several I-deal types beyond developmental I-deals, responding to calls for more diverse perspectives on the impact of I-deals (Van der Heijden et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2021). In this chapter, findings are discussed using Social Exchange Theory (SET) and Goal-Setting Theory. Each I-deal type is discussed separately to assess its impact on employability and theoretical alignment. Furthermore, unexpected findings are interpreted using both literature and logical reasoning. Finally, practical implications, recommendations for future research, and study limitations are addressed.

5.1 Interpretation of findings and future studies

5.1.1 Location flexibility I-deals

The results regarding location flexibility I-deals were unexpected. Although hypothesized to positively impact employees' perceived employability by enhancing work-life balance, adaptability, and willingness to develop new competencies, no significant relationships were found. Furthermore, although not significant, the PROCESS analysis showed a negative trend for WDC and opportunity awareness (Table 8). Both the lack of support for the hypothesis and the potential negative trend highlight the need for further research into this relationship. As many employees use location flexibility to balance work and home demands (Oostrom et al., 2016), it is important to understand how organizations can offer this flexibility without possibly negatively affecting employability.

One possible explanation for the unexpected negative trend is related to the concept of resource depletion. Balancing substantial non-work obligations could limit the time and energy employees have to develop themselves professionally or engage in other activities that enhance

their employability (Veld et al., 2016). Studies suggest that perceived organizational support for integrating work and home responsibilities can help to diminish these potential negative effects (Kelly et al., 2008; McNall et al., 2010; Sok et al., 2014). They argue that if organizations support employees' non-work demands, employees are more likely to experience positive outcomes from working outside the traditional office, which is the main component of location flexibility (Rosen et al., 2013).

In line with SET, employees may reciprocate this organizational support with behaviors that are favorable for the organization, at the same time developing their employability, such as enhancing job qualifications or developing new competencies (Sok et al., 2014; Liao et al., 2016). However, this reciprocity depends on employees perceiving active support for their non-work obligations (Sok et al., 2014). Therefore, organizations could benefit from developing strategies working towards creating a culture of support for employees' work-life balance. However, findings from most studies were focused on the specific fields, such as academic staff (Sok et al., 2014; Veld et al., 2016). The applicability of these findings across different organizational settings is therefore limited. Future studies could explore how organizations in different contexts can develop these strategies that create support and their potential to influence employability for employees using location flexibility I-deals.

5.1.2 Schedule flexibility I-deals

Similarly, schedule flexibility I-deals did not appear to have a significant relationship with perceived employability, even though this type of I-deal was the most widely offered in the dataset. It was expected that schedule flexibility would negatively impact perceived employability, because employees using this I-deal may focus more on achieving work-life balance rather than on professional development and motivation for enhancing employability (Oostrom et al., 2016). Furthermore, although not significant, the PROCESS analysis showed a positive trend for job qualifications (see Table 9). Both the lack of support for the hypothesis and the potential positive trend highlight the need for further research to better understand this relationship.

Given that schedule flexibility I-deals are widely offered, it would be valuable for organizations to explore how to structure and support these I-deals to help employees maintain or enhance their employability while addressing personal needs. As Sok et al. (2014) highlighted, supportive organizational cultures can lead to positive reciprocity and employees' commitment to

career growth. Future research could investigate how such cultures might impact the relationship between schedule flexibility I-deals and employability, helping organizations to identify strategies for creating an environment that benefits both flexibility and employability.

Furthermore, the unexpected positive trend between schedule flexibility and job qualifications suggests that future research could help organizations looking to improve the benefits of flexible work arrangements. It could be examined whether schedule flexibility gives employees the autonomy to manage their own time, which in turn supports their professional development (Kelly et al., 2011). Studies could look into how organizations can leverage schedule flexibility to potentially enhance job qualifications, helping employees to use it not just for personal needs, but also for professional growth.

5.1.3 Financial incentive I-deals

The findings regarding financial incentive I-deals and perceived employability are mixed. Standard regression and correlation analyses did not show any significant relationships, while the PROCESS analysis showed a significant positive effect on opportunity awareness, indicating that employees with financial incentive I-deals may be more aware of their potential career opportunities and developments in their profession. Additionally, a near-significant effect on job qualifications suggests a potential positive relationship worth further investigation.

Interestingly, no relationship between this type of I-deal and any perceived employability dimensions was expected. Furthermore, although financial incentive I-deals were the least commonly offered in the dataset, they appeared as one of the few significant influences on employability. This suggests an interesting opportunity for organizations, as the limited use of this I-deal, together with the unexpected finding, may mean an undiscovered potential for enhancing employability through financial incentives. Organizations could therefore benefit from further research investigating how financial incentive I-deals can be used to improve employees' perceived employability in specific dimensions.

Financial incentive I-deals are not typically associated with employability, as socio-emotional aspects essential for employability, such as employees' perceived capabilities, career success, and job opportunities, are unlikely to result from economic incentives (Rousseau et al., 2009). Furthermore, SET suggests financial incentive I-deals may not drive employability-enhancing behaviors because of the lack of positive reciprocity, as they often involve

compensation without increased employee contributions (Rousseau et al., 2016; Simosi et al., 2021). However, Goal-Setting Theory can offer an alternative perspective, explaining the emerged relationship. A key element of financial incentive I-deals is the higher pay or reward employees receive for their unique contributions or achievements (Rosen et al., 2013). The anticipation of this financial incentive could encourage employees to set clearer career goals to maximize their potential rewards (Latham & Locke, 2007). Financial incentives in this case would serve as a goal, driving employees to look for growth opportunities, potentially increasing their awareness of opportunities for career advancements.

Additionally, employees often negotiate financial incentives with their supervisor based on their unique contributions or skills. Here, it is not necessarily about the money itself, but what it represents: the recognition increases employees' confidence in their abilities and awareness of their value. This, in turn, motivates them to explore career options either inside or outside the organization, potentially increasing their perception of career opportunities. So, while economic incentives alone may not generate the socio-emotional positivity associated with employability, they can indirectly increase opportunity awareness by encouraging employees to set goals for career growth in anticipation of future financial rewards or by improving employees' perceptions of their value.

The marginally significant effect on job qualifications could be explained similarly: financial rewards based on unique achievements or contributions might not directly improve job qualifications but may contribute to employees' confidence in their existing qualifications, increasing their perception of being qualified for their job. Lastly, SET offers an additional insight into this potential relationship. Employees who feel valued through financial incentives may be inclined to improve their skills as a subtle form of reciprocity (Blau, 1964). So, while the impact might be modest and indirect, financial incentives could create an environment where employees feel valued, which in turn motivates them to develop themselves, positively impacting their perceived job qualifications.

5.1.4 Task and work responsibility I-deals

Task and work responsibility I-deals positively impact certain employability dimensions, particularly job qualifications and WDC. This means that employees who receive customized tasks and responsibilities perceive themselves as more qualified for their current role and motivated to

develop their skills or change jobs. Furthermore, a near-significant positive link with opportunity awareness suggests that employees with this I-deal might feel more aware of their career opportunities. However, these positive effects did not hold in the more complex PROCESS model, where age and gender were included as moderators, indicating that the relationship may be weak and sensitive to influences of additional variables, and the impact should not be overestimated.

A possible explanation for the weak effect is that employability outcomes are influenced by a larger set of organizational and individual factors that could either moderate or be more important than the direct effect of task and work responsibility I-deals. Rather than being a dominant predictor, this I-deal may serve as one of many factors contributing to perceived employability. So, although relatively common among employees in this study, the effectiveness of this I-deal in enhancing employees' perceived employability appeared to be limited. Therefore, organizations might need to consider combining task and work responsibility I-deals with other initiatives to impact employees' employability more meaningfully. Future studies could explore whether such combinations can generate more impactful improvements in perceived employability.

SET and Goal-Setting Theory help explain both how task and work responsibility I-deals contribute to employability and why their impact may be more limited than expected. SET suggests that employees who receive customized tasks and responsibilities perceive organizational support and reciprocate by putting more effort into their roles, potentially enhancing job qualifications and willingness to develop new skills (Rousseau, 2006; Liao et al., 2016). Meanwhile, Goal-Setting Theory explains that employees seek these I-deals to pursue goals related to skill development and growth that contribute to their sense of employability (Liao et al., 2016; Ostrom et al., 2016).

Goal-Setting Theory can also be used to clarify why this type of I-deal may have a limited effect on employability. The theory argues that goals are internal motivators that guide an individual's behavior towards specific outcomes (Latham & Locke, 2007). For task and work responsibility I-deals to effectively enhance perceived employability, employees need to approach them with career-oriented goals focused on development and professional growth. If employees instead use these I-deals mainly for short-term convenience or goals, rather than for their long-term professional development, they may fail to leverage the I-deal's potential to improve on employability dimensions like job qualifications or WDC. Thus, if the goals behind making use of

this I-deal are not aligned with self-improvement or development, their impact on employability is likely to be minimal.

To improve the potential impact of task and work responsibility I-deals on employability, organizations could encourage employees to see these I-deals as opportunities for career growth, rather than only tools for daily tasks. By emphasizing a developmental goal focus in pursuing these I-deals, organizations may increase the likelihood of employees using them in ways that positively impact their employability. To examine the role of this goal orientation, future studies could investigate whether employees who perceive task and work responsibility I-deals as opportunities for career growth experience more gains in perceived employability than those who view them as short-term, task-specific tools.

5.1.5 Age as moderator

No differential effects were found for younger or older employees regarding task and work responsibility I-deals, despite expectations that these I-deals would have a stronger effect on younger employees' perceived employability, as they would prioritize opportunities for learning and development and therefore more often pursue I-deals that provide them with these opportunities (Li et al., 2021). However, the impact of these I-deals on employability was limited, and age did not influence the already weak relationship. The absence of a moderating influence from age may be explained by Goal-Setting theory, which supports the idea that opportunities for development provided by task and work responsibility I-deals motivate employees by giving them goals to work towards (Latham & Locke, 2007). This intrinsic motivation could contribute to employees' perceived employability, regardless of their age. So, while age might influence the type of I-deals employees seek, the positive impact of task and work responsibility I-deals on employability, although modest, shows to be largely independent of age. This is an indication that organizations could provide these I-deals across age groups to enhance employability, rather than targeting specific age groups.

In line with what was expected, age did not influence the relationship between the flexibility I-deals and employability. Although employees of different ages may seek flexibility for different reasons, the desire for flexibility is consistent across age groups (Li et al., 2021).

Additionally, no moderation relationship was hypothesized considering financial incentive I-deals, as no relationship was expected between this I-deal and employability. Even though there did appear to be a connection between them, age did not moderate this relationship. The only

significant finding in the PROCESS model concerning financial I-deals was a main effect of age on job qualifications. This main effect was positive, meaning that as age increases, job qualifications tend to increase as well. This is likely because, over time, employees accumulate experience and expertise in their field of work, naturally increasing their job qualifications.

5.1.6 Gender as moderator

It was expected that task and work responsibility I-deals would have a stronger effect for male employees, based on findings suggesting that men might be more inclined to prioritize skill development and professional growth opportunities (Cifre et al., 2018) and therefore more often pursue this type of I-deal. However, gender did not significantly moderate the relationship between task and work responsibility I-deals and employability, even though the effect was weak. A potential reason for this might be changes in workplace culture, where men and women increasingly have similar career aspirations, both actively looking for challenging work and skill enhancement opportunities through task and work responsibility I-deals. Women, however, tend to experience social barriers in negotiating for these I-deals, affecting their ability to access these benefits (King et al., 2012).

Support structures, such as mentorship programs and diversity initiatives, might help women overcome barriers to negotiating task and work responsibility I-deals (Greer & Kirk, 2022; Das & Jha, 2024). Future studies could further examine how different organizational contexts or support mechanisms impact men's and women's access to, and outcomes from, task and work responsibility I-deals. While existing studies suggest that support structures help to diminish negotiation barriers for women (Greer & Kirk, 2022; Das & Jha, 2024), the impact of these initiatives on outcomes women experience, particularly regarding employability and career development, remains unclear (Das & Jha, 2024). Understanding this relationship is important for organizations to create more equitable opportunities, ensuring that both men and women can equally benefit from task and work responsibility I-deals. Additionally, further exploring this relationship is important, as most studies on women's career advancement have focused on top positions in the USA or China, which limits the understanding of these relationships in other contexts (Das & Jha, 2024).

Furthermore, for financial I-deals, no gender moderation was hypothesized, as no relationship with employability was expected. However, gender did significantly moderate the

relationship between financial I-deals and WDC. The negative main effect of gender indicates that women are less willing to develop new competencies or change jobs than men. However, the positive interaction effect indicates that financial I-deals have a stronger impact on women's WDC. The contrasting direction of the main and interaction effects is surprising and warrants further research to understand why financial I-deals might have a stronger impact on women's WDC. Studies could explore the underlying mechanisms of this effect by, for example, investigating how financial I-deals are perceived and used differently by men and women. Additionally, exploring whether this finding holds in different contexts or larger datasets could create further insight into why financial I-deals might have a stronger effect on women.

Lastly, flexibility I-deals were expected to have a stronger effect on the perceived employability of women, as they more often pursue flexibility I-deals than men (Cifre et al., 2018). However, no significant relationship was found between both flexibility I-deals and perceived employability. While this does not rule out the possibility of an interaction effect, gender did not significantly act as a moderator between these I-deals and employability. This result is interesting, given that recent studies continue to consistently mention that caregiving responsibilities primarily fall to women, and therefore are looking for more flexibility in their jobs (Cifre et al., 2018; Greer & Kirk, 2022). This suggests there would be an interaction effect by gender. It is worth noting, however, that much of the existing studies have been conducted in the USA and China (Das & Jha, 2024), where gender roles may differ from those in the Dutch context. It would therefore be valuable to extend this study to the Dutch context with a larger sample, as the findings of this study do not align with previous studies.

5.2 Limitations and recommendations

Some limitations to this study have to be considered, as they may have impacted the findings of this study. First, one key limitation is the smaller sample size than initially planned. This reduced the statistical power of the regression analyses, which might have made it more difficult to find significant effects. Furthermore, the small sample size affects the generalizability of the results. This makes it difficult to extend the findings of this study to the broader context of Dutch organizations. Therefore, the findings of this study should be interpreted with caution, given the small sample size. Researchers could, however, take the outcomes of this study, some of which unexpected, as valuable avenues for future research, as discussed in this chapter.

Furthermore, this study aimed to increase the variance in type and number of I-deals by gathering information from employees across different organizations. However, gathering participants turned out to be more challenging than initially expected. Collecting data via social media platforms did not yield enough participants for a substantial dataset, limiting both the generalizability of the findings and statistical power of the analyses. Although not possible for this study due to limited time and resources, future studies might benefit from setting up a larger-scale study across several organizations within the Dutch context. By including several organizations, researchers can capture a broader range of I-deal types, as recommended by several studies on I-deals (Rosen et al., 2013; Rousseau et al., 2009; Oostrom et al., 2016). This could improve the generalizability of the findings and give more insight into the impact of I-deals on perceived employability across different organizational settings.

Another limitation of this study concerns the measurement of the employability dimension, opportunity awareness. The internal consistency of the scale for this construct was insufficient, causing it to be considered unreliable for use in the analyses. Consequently, as the scale consisted of only two items, one item was chosen to represent opportunity awareness by itself. This might have limited the strength of the conclusions drawn regarding opportunity awareness, suggesting that caution should be taken interpreting the results for this employability dimension.

Finally, this study was of cross-sectional nature, meaning that data was collected at only one point in time. As the effects of I-deals on employees' perceived employability might form over time, it could be interesting to conduct longitudinal studies to better understand the dynamics of this relationship.

6. Conclusions

This study aimed to find out how the different types of I-deals impact employees' perceived employability and to what extent this relationship differs for different ages and genders.

Task and work responsibility I-deals positively influenced employees' perceived job qualifications and WDC, but this impact weakened with additional variables in the regression model, indicating that these I-deals should not be relied upon as a primary strategy for enhancing employability. Location and schedule flexibility I-deals had no significant impact on perceived employability, challenging theoretical assumptions about their role. Financial incentive I-deals showed mixed results, positively impacting opportunity awareness, possibly by enhancing employees' perception of their value in the organization, but not affecting other employability dimensions. Age had no significant impact, indicating that the impact of I-deals, if present, is relatively consistent across age groups. Gender, however, mattered, with financial I-deals being more effective for women in developing new competencies or changing jobs.

The takeaway from this study is that the impact of I-deals on employees' perceived employability is more limited than initially expected, following from little substantial evidence supporting I-deal's positive or negative effects. This calls for a careful approach when using I-deals to enhance employability, as well as for further research to come to more extensive and impactful conclusions about I-deal's effects. So, overall, while task and work responsibility and financial incentive I-deals have some potential for enhancing perceived employability, their impact should not be overestimated. Further studies are needed to further explore this study's unexpected and complex findings to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the role I-deals play in predicting perceived employability.

7. References

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8. Appendices

Appendix A - Questionnaire English

How many employees work in your organization? (This question helps to categorize participants based on the size of their organization, which may influence their experiences with I-deals and perceived employability).

<10 employees, small (10-50 employees), medium (51-500 employees), large (501+ employees)

I-deals: The statements below address different types of employment terms to which I-deals may apply. Please indicate the extent to which you, as an employee, have negotiated specific agreements with your supervisor(s) by indicating the extent to which you agree with these statements (1 = strongly disagree, 3 = neutral, 5 = strongly agree).

Location flexibility

1. Because of my individual needs, I have negotiated a unique arrangement with my supervisor that allows me to complete a portion of my work outside of the office.
2. Because of my particular circumstances, my supervisor allows me to do work from somewhere other than the main office.

Schedule flexibility

1. My supervisor considers my personal needs when making my work schedule
2. At my request, my supervisor has accommodated my off-the-job demands when assigning my work hours.
3. Outside of formal leave and sick time, my supervisor has allowed me to take time off to attend to non-work-related issues.

Financial incentives

1. My supervisor has ensured that my compensation arrangement (e.g., hourly vs. salaried) meets my individual needs.
2. Because of my personal circumstances, my supervisor has created a compensation arrangement that is tailored to fit me.
3. Because of my unique skills and contributions, my supervisor has been willing to negotiate my compensation

4. Beyond formal policies, my supervisor has raised my pay because of the exceptional contributions that I make to the organization.
5. After my initial appointment, I negotiated with my supervisor to develop a compensation plan that rewards my unique contributions.

Task and work responsibilities

1. I have successfully asked for extra responsibilities that take advantage of the skills that I bring to the job.
 2. At my request, my supervisor has assigned me tasks that better develop my skills.
 3. I have negotiated with my supervisor for tasks that better fit my personality, skills, and abilities
 4. My supervisor has offered me opportunities to take on desired responsibilities outside of my formal job requirements.
 5. In response to my distinctive contributions, my supervisor has granted me more flexibility in how I complete my job
 6. Following my initial appointment, my supervisor assigned me to a desirable position that makes use of my unique abilities.
-

Perceived employability: This section is about how you experience your employability. For the statements below, please indicate the extent to which you agree with them (1 = strongly disagree, 3 = neutral, 5 = strongly agree).

Job qualifications

1. My level of education is sufficient for getting a job in my area of work.
2. An employer would be impressed with my qualifications.
3. I have a good work history.
4. I need more training or education.
5. My work qualifications are good.
6. I have good job references.

Willingness to develop new competencies or change jobs.

Willingness to develop competencies.

1. I find it important to develop myself in a broad sense, so I will be able to perform different task activities or jobs within the organization.
2. If the organization needs me to perform different tasks, I am prepared to change my work activities.
3. If the organization offered me the possibility to obtain new work experiences, I would take it.

Willingness to change jobs or departments.

1. In case of organizational changes, I would prefer to stay in my department with my colleagues.
2. I am not willing to start another job.

Opportunity awareness:

1. I remain current on the trends and developments in my profession
2. I make sure I am informed about vacancies.

Lastly, I would like to ask a few questions to take into consideration some background characteristics in the analyses. I would like to emphasize again that I am only using this data to compare groups and not to make statements about individuals. You will never be identifiable in the report.

How old are you? Write your answer in numbers.

XX

What is your gender?

Male/female/prefer not to disclose.

Regardless of whether you personally make use of them, does your organization offer individualized deals or arrangements tailored to meet the unique needs or preferences of employees?

Yes, my organization offers individualized deals or arrangements/No, my organization does not offer individualized deals or arrangements.

Appendix B - Questionnaire Dutch

Hoeveel werknemers werken er in uw organisatie? (Deze vraag helpt deelnemers te categoriseren op basis van de grootte van hun organisatie, wat van invloed kan zijn op hun ervaringen met I-deals en ervaren inzetbaarheid).

<10 werknemers, klein (10-50 werknemers), middelgroot (51-500 werknemers), groot (501+ werknemers)

I-deals: Onderstaande stellingen gaan over verschillende soorten arbeidsvoorwaarden waarop I-deals van toepassing kunnen zijn. Geef aan in hoeverre u als werknemer specifieke afspraken hebt onderhandeld met uw leidinggevende(n) door in te vullen in hoeverre u het eens bent met deze stellingen (1 = volledig mee oneens, 3 = neutraal, 5 = volledig mee eens).

Locatie flexibiliteit

1. Vanwege mijn persoonlijke behoeften heb ik met mijn leidinggevende een unieke regeling onderhandeld waardoor ik een deel van mijn werk buiten kantoor kan doen.
2. Vanwege mijn specifieke omstandigheden staat mijn leidinggevende het toe dat ik mijn werk ergens anders doe dan op het kantoor.

Flexibiliteit van het werkrooster

1. Mijn leidinggevende houdt rekening met mijn persoonlijke behoeften bij het maken van mijn werkrooster.
2. Op mijn verzoek heeft mijn leidinggevende rekening gehouden met mijn niet-werk gerelateerde verplichtingen bij het inplannen van mijn werkuren.
3. Buiten formeelverlof en ziekteverlof om heeft mijn leidinggevende mij de mogelijkheid gegeven om vrij te nemen voor niet-werk gerelateerde zaken.

Financiële beloningen

1. Mijn leidinggevende heeft ervoor gezorgd dat mijn compensatieregeling (bijv. uurloon versus vast salaris) aansluit bij mijn persoonlijke behoeften.
2. Vanwege mijn persoonlijke omstandigheden heeft mijn leidinggevende een compensatieregeling opgesteld die op mij is afgestemd.

3. Vanwege mijn unieke vaardigheden en bijdragen is mijn leidinggevende bereid geweest te onderhandelen over mijn compensatie.
4. Buiten het formele beleid om, heeft mijn leidinggevende mijn salaris verhoogd vanwege de uitzonderlijke bijdragen die ik lever aan de organisatie.
5. Na mijn eerste aanstelling heb ik met mijn leidinggevende onderhandeld om een compensatieplan te ontwikkelen dat mijn unieke bijdragen beloont.

Taak en werkverantwoordelijkheden

1. Ik heb succesvol gevraagd om extra verantwoordelijkheden die aansluiten op vaardigheden die ik meebreng naar mijn werk.
2. Op mijn verzoek heeft mijn leidinggevende mij taken toegewezen waarmee ik mijn vaardigheden beter kan ontwikkelen.
3. Ik heb met mijn leidinggevende onderhandeld over taken die beter passen bij mijn persoonlijkheid, vaardigheden en capaciteiten.
4. Mijn leidinggevende heeft mij mogelijkheden aangeboden om gewenste verantwoordelijkheden op te pakken buiten mijn formele functie-eisen om.
5. Als reactie op mijn opvallende bijdragen heeft mijn leidinggevende mij meer flexibiliteit gegeven in hoe ik mijn werk uitvoer.
6. Na mijn eerste aanstelling heeft mijn leidinggevende mij een gewenste positie toegewezen die past bij mijn unieke capaciteiten

Ervaren inzetbaarheid: Dit onderdeel gaat over hoe u uw inzetbaarheid ervaart. Geef voor de onderstaande stellingen aan in hoeverre u het met deze stellingen eens bent (1 = volledig mee oneens, 3 = neutraal, 5 = volledig mee eens).

Functiekwificaties

1. Mijn opleidingsniveau is voldoende om een baan in mijn werkgebied te krijgen.
2. Een werkgever zou onder de indruk zijn van mijn kwalificaties.
3. Ik heb een goed werkverleden/cv.
4. Ik heb meer training of opleiding nodig.

5. Mijn werkkwalificaties zijn goed.
6. Ik heb goede referenties.

Bereidheid om nieuwe competenties te ontwikkelen of van baan te wisselen

Bereidheid om competenties te ontwikkelen

1. Ik vind het belangrijk om mezelf breed te ontwikkelen zodat ik in staat ben om verschillende taken of functies uit te voeren in de organisatie.
2. Als de organisatie mij nodig heeft om andere taken uit te voeren, ben ik bereid om mijn werkzaamheden te veranderen.
3. Als de organisatie mij de mogelijkheid zou geven om nieuwe werkervaringen op te doen, zou ik die aangrijpen.

Bereidheid om van baan of afdeling te wisselen

1. In het geval van organisatorische veranderingen, zou ik het liefst op mijn afdeling blijven met mijn collega's.
2. Ik ben niet bereid om aan een andere baan te beginnen.

Kansbewustzijn

1. Ik blijf op de hoogte van de trends en ontwikkelingen in mijn vakgebied.
2. Ik zorg dat ik op de hoogte ben van vacatures.

Ten slotte wil ik u graag een paar vragen stellen om in de analyses rekening te kunnen houden met een aantal achtergrondkenmerken. Daarbij wil ik nogmaals benadrukken dat ik deze gegevens alleen gebruik om groepen te vergelijken en niet om uitspraken over individuen te doen. U zult nooit herkenbaar zijn in de rapportage.

Hoe oud bent u? Schrijf uw antwoord in getallen

XX

Wat is uw geslacht?

Man/vrouw/zeg ik liever niet.

Ongeacht of u er persoonlijk gebruik van maakt, biedt uw organisatie geïndividualiseerde deals of regelingen aan die zijn afgestemd op de unieke behoeften of voorkeuren van werknemers?

Ja, mijn organisatie biedt geïndividualiseerde deals of regelingen aan/Nee, mijn organisatie biedt geen geïndividualiseerde deals of regelingen aan
